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Amendment To The Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A mechanical handle switch assembly integrated within a door of a vehicle and utilized for actuating a vehicle-based system, comprising:

a door handle mechanism coupled to the door for actuation by a user, said door handle mechanism being movable in a substantially outboard direction for both actuating the vehicle-based system and unlatching the door;

a drive train mechanism coupled to said door handle mechanism and being actuated by said door handle mechanism; [[and]]

a switch device operatively ~~engaging~~ operatively coupled to said drive train mechanism and being selectively ~~closed~~ operated by said drive train mechanism[[.]] to actuate said vehicle-based system;

said drive train mechanism having a sufficiently high ratio such that an initial movement of said door handle mechanism generates a significantly larger movement to operate said switch device; and

a damping mechanism coupled to one of said door handle mechanism and said drive train mechanism for slowing movement of said door handle mechanism and said drive train mechanism.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The mechanical handle switch assembly recited in claim 1 wherein said door handle mechanism is movable within a predetermined travel distance, said door handle mechanism actuating said drive train mechanism and ~~closing~~ operating said switch device when said door handle mechanism is moved a substantially small portion of said predetermined travel distance.

Claim 3 (Original):. The mechanical handle switch assembly recited in claim 1 wherein said door handle mechanism is movable within a predetermined travel distance, said predetermined travel distance including a switch-triggering distance and an unlatching distance that is greater than and inclusive of said switch-triggering distance, said door handle mechanism being moved by said switch-triggering distance for actuating said switch device, said door handle mechanism being moved by said unlatching distance for unlatching the door.

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Claim 4 (Withdrawn): The mechanical handle switch assembly recited in claim 1 wherein said door handle mechanism has a pull configuration for unlatching the door.

Claim 5 (Original): The mechanical handle switch assembly recited in claim 1 wherein said door handle mechanism has a lift configuration for unlatching the door.

Claim 6 (Original): The mechanical handle switch assembly recited in claim 1 wherein said drive train mechanism is a gear mechanism.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The mechanical handle switch assembly recited in claim 1 wherein said drive train mechanism includes a cam mechanism.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): The mechanical handle switch assembly recited in claim 1 wherein said drive train mechanism is a lever mechanism.

Claim 9 (Original): The mechanical handle switch assembly recited in claim 1 wherein said switch device is biased to an open position.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A passively actuated vehicle system ~~passive entry system for a vehicle~~ comprising:

said mechanical handle switch assembly recited in claim 1;

a controller;

a vehicle-based transceiver coupled to said controller;

a portable transponder carried by a user and utilized for communicating with said vehicle based transponder;

a locking mechanism coupled to said controller for actuation by said controller;

said switch device coupled to one of said controller and said vehicle-based transceiver, and in use actuating said vehicle-based transceiver to transmit a challenge signal to said portable transponder;

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said locking mechanism unlocking said door after said controller determines that said user is an authorized entity.

~~a switch device coupled to one of said controller and said vehicle-based transceiver, said switch device for actuating said vehicle-based transceiver to transmit a challenge signal to said portable transponder;~~

~~a drive train mechanism engaging said switch device for closing said switch device;~~

~~a door handle mechanism coupled to the door for actuation by a user, said door handle mechanism being movable in a substantially outboard direction by a predetermined distance for both actuating said passively actuated vehicle system and unlatching the door, said predetermined distance including a switch-triggering distance and an unlatching distance that is greater than and inclusive of said switch-triggering distance, said switch-triggering distance for triggering said switch device and actuating said controller for determining whether said user is authorized to enter the vehicle, said unlatching distance for providing access to the vehicle;~~

~~a locking mechanism coupled to and actuated by said controller, said locking mechanism for unlocking said door when said controller determines that said user is an authorized entity and before said door handle mechanism has moved by said unlatching distance.~~

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The passively actuated vehicle system ~~passive entry system~~ recited in claim 10 wherein said switch-triggering distance is substantially less than said unlatching distance.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn): The passive entry system recited in claim 10 wherein said door handle mechanism has a pull configuration for unlatching the door.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The passively actuated vehicle system ~~passive entry system~~ recited in claim 10 wherein said door handle mechanism has a lift configuration for unlatching the door.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The passively actuated vehicle system ~~passive entry system~~ recited in claim 10 wherein said drive train mechanism is a gear mechanism.

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Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The passively actuated vehicle system ~~passive entry system~~ recited in claim 10 wherein said drive train mechanism includes a cam mechanism.

Claim 16 (Withdrawn): The passive entry system recited in claim 10 wherein said drive train mechanism is a lever mechanism.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The passively actuated vehicle system ~~passive entry system~~ recited in claim 10 wherein said switch device is biased to an open position.

Claims 18-20 (Cancelled)

Claim 21 (New): The passively actuated vehicle system recited in claim 10, wherein said passively actuated vehicle system is a passive entry system for a vehicle.